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**CITY OF BELEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 12, 2019**

Chairman Steve Ethridge called the regular meeting of the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PRESENT: Chairman Steve Ethridge
Commissioner Jim Lardner
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong
Commissioner Claudine Montano

ABSENT: Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon

CITY STAFF: Steven Tomita, Planning & Economic Development Director

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Claudine Montano moved to approve agenda.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong seconded the motion.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Jim Lardner moved to approve the minutes of July 8, 2019.

Commissioner Claudine Montano seconded the motion.

Motion carried

PUBLIC COMMENT – 3 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS

None

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RE-ORGANIZATION

Steven Tomita said that this was not a re-organization but an election of officers. Officers are elected once a year.

Chairman Steve Ethridge opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Commissioner Jim Lardner nominated Steve Ethridge for Chairman.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong seconded the motion.

There were no more nominations made. A vote was called for the nomination of Steve Ethridge as Chairman.

Vote was as follows:

Commissioner Claudine Montano	Yes
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong	Yes
Commissioner Jim Lardner	Yes

Nominations for Vice Chairman were requested.

Commissioner Jim Lardner nominated Pete Armstrong for Vice Chair.

Commissioner Claudine Montano seconded the motion.

There were no more nominations made.

Vote was as follows:

Commissioner Claudine Montano	Yes
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong	Abstained
Commissioner Jim Lardner	Yes
Chairman Steve Ethridge	Yes

DISCUSSION

Downtown Master Plan

Steven Tomita said that they are finally ready to move forward and discuss the Downtown Master Plan. Many of the elements will be placed in the Comprehensive Plan. Pages 1-41 were to be reviewed.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that he likes the background and the history of the Master Plan and feels that it needs to be a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Steven Tomita said that he would look at page 2, where it mentioned the re-development of the Downtown area. He feels that some of this also needs to be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he would like to know how those boundaries were drawn for the Downtown Area.

Steven Tomita went over the area that was distinguished as the Downtown Area. Places like Becker Ave Park is included due to the fact that it faces Reinken Ave. This is called the Main Street area. This also includes the Rail Runner area. Belen Main Street Organization is focusing on the downtown area for re-development. He went over the boundary that distinguishes this area.

Chairman Steve Ethridge asked if there are any additional restrictions that come with being distinguished as a re-development area.

Steven Tomita said that the Main Street Organization is focusing on this area as a re-development area.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that there was an area discussed, to be declared the historical area.

Steven Tomita said that there are some places that have been declared historic districts by the Belen Historic Preservation Group. There are different criteria that need to be examined before a building or an area can be declared Historic. Once that is declared, you will have to be retained. All repairs, etc. will have to be approved by the Historic Preservation Group. He went over the some of the criteria that has to be met to become a historic area and/or structure. Some of these criteria are being reviewed and considered for change.

They continued to review the pages of the Master Plan.

Steven Tomita said that several of the existing plans need to be referenced in the Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that they were reviewing several different parts of several different plans that are 10 years or older, he was wondering if any of the information is even feasible considering the age of the plans.

Steven Tomita said that these numbers, etc., will be updated to reflect the current situations.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that most of the beginning information of the Master Plan needs to be in the Comprehensive Plan.

Steven Tomita said that the existing studies and plans all contain information that needs to be included, but the different plans need to be referenced in the Comprehensive Plan as references.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that Belen and Los Lunas were mentioned on the news as being fast growing communities in relation to the growth of Albuquerque. It was mentioned that one of the factors was the fact that it is faster to get into Albuquerque from Belen and Los Lunas than it is from within Albuquerque itself.

Steven Tomita said that this area is the fastest grown communities in the state. The information within these other plans that have and will not change should be added to the Comprehensive Plan. That information does not change. When the Commission develop the Land Use Plan for the Comprehensive Plan, it will change some of the information in all the other plans. The Land Use Plan affects them all. The Land Use Plan, within the Comprehensive Plan, should have been

in the existing plan but it never was included because it was not required. The Land Use Plan is very important for the development of the area. It should not be done haphazardly. It needs to be done in an organized fashion.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that he noticed that section D & E are missing in the land use section of the information that they are reviewing and he wondered where those sections were, because he could not find them in the documentation that he has.

Steven Tomita said that he would look into it.

Walkable Belen was discussed. There is a huge swath of land that goes all the way to the rail runner station that is being looked at for walking paths that include small shops, restaurants, etc. Community walks have also been mentioned. The Farmers Growers Market has seen an increase in promotion with other venues being added. An increase of participation and growth is happening.

Steven Tomita said that the existing conditions section of the Master Plan needs to be added to the Comprehensive Plan. The Zoning Code needs to be included, not the whole code but sections and a reference. That is very important. When they create the Land Use map it is going to affect everything. The Zoning Code governs the City of Belen as far as development goes. This is important for the development of Belen. The Zoning Codes must match the Comprehensive Plan. It is State mandated.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he has seven huge trees located in what he calls the parkway area. It is the area between the road and the property line. That area is owned by the City even though most of the landowners in his area maintain the section in front of their homes. He would like to know how this area going to be coordinated between the City and the Land Owners. There has to be a working relationship between the two.

Steven Tomita said that this needs to be included in our Landscape Ordinance. The Council will have to adopt it.

They all discussed the downtown streets and felt that needs to be included in the Comprehensive Plan. All of the streets do not need to be included but a brief recognition of the main streets and their primary feature. The River Park needs to be added also.

Steven Tomita told the Commission they can now see how all this is integrated with the different plans that the City has.

The transportation section needs to reference the City Development Codes. Most of the large developments look for a traffic count when they come into a City to develop. The new developments that are happening was discussed. The transportation section will be reviewed again at a later date. They discussed the walkways and bike paths within the City. The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document for the City. The Historic features were discussed.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he understands the Harvey House being declared historical, but asked if it ok to include private property, like the Belen Hotel, and their structures to be included also.

Steven Tomita said that a paragraph should be added that introduces Historic Preservation; its importance; identify the existing buildings and introduce the Historic Ordinance and refer to that ordinance.

A plaque identifying the different historic buildings was discussed. There are a lot of buildings that are of historic significance in Belen. The parks and open spaces was discussed and it was decided to take up this section at the next scheduled meeting.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he has been driving around Belen and was really please to see how many pocket parks that we actually have. There are more than he was aware of.

Pocket Parks were then discussed. Pocket Parks are really useful. Housing and neighborhoods should be a part of the land use section. Retaining the existing neighborhood areas and the new developments needs to addressed within the land use area also. This needs to be done to retain the existing atmosphere along with blending a new development that may go into that area. Harmony with the old and the new should be done. In our Comprehensive Plan we need to show what we envision for the City of Belen in the immediate future and the extended future. Neighborhood connections between neighborhood streets and heavier traffic areas need to be shown. Sections 1-3 have been gone over. The next section need to be gone over very closely. Sections 4, 5, and 7 are the next sections to be discussed. The Commission was informed that there are two requests on the agenda for the next meeting and they may not have the time to review those sections until the first meeting in December.

IFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Communication from the Commission and Staff.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that a national home builder may be coming into Belen. The Subdivision next to Desi Loop will be breaking ground next week. There will be another one coming into the area near the southern entrance into Belen. There are two hotels that are interested in the area. One by the Freeway and another near the downtown area. The one downtown would be a boutique hotel. We are now getting more comments on how they are seeing the new developments that are now happening and are pleased to see it. There are more people coming into Belen for gas and wanting to stay overnight but there are no rooms or spaces available. There are now new RV parks interested in the area and the hotels looking. Things are picking up. There are now more manufacturing companies that are showing interest in the Belen area. He attended a meeting with some of these investors and showed them what Belen has to offer.

There were no other informational items.

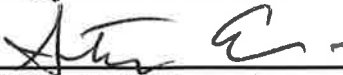
ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission, Commissioner Claudine Montano moved to adjourn.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Planning & Zoning Commission adjourned at 7:35 PM.


Chairman Steve Ethridge

ATTEST:


Steven Tomita, Planning & Economic Development Director